

The Christian and Medicines

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There is a confusion among Christians that believers should not use medicines. However, the Bible nowhere makes it statutory or law for the believer to refrain from medicines. In fact, the Bible is against humans making laws that God has not made. Matthew 15.9; Isaiah 29.13. There are only the Ten commandments and the Two Great Commandments of Jesus Christ. Matthew 22.37.

The Bible never tells us that using medicines or any scientific invention (e.g. ovens, utensils, agricultural technology, weapons, etc) is sign of unbelief. In fact, God gives wisdom so that man through science and technology can improve his living. The only evil is when man begins to trust in science and technology above and beyond God like the kings of Israel who trusted in chariots and horsemen or physicians.

Now, take the example of irrigation. It is very important for a farmer to believe in God for rains and production. However, this doesn't mean that he must refrain from irrigational technologies like water pumps, etc., made possible by modern science, especially when he has capacity to avail of such technology. Likewise, one uses mosquito repellents to repel mosquitoes, tooth paste to clean teeth and kill harmful germs, right choice of food to replenish the body, fans and coolers to regulate temperature. A believer can use any of these and still have strong faith in God. The same David who fought with a sling later used swords in battle. He didn't go down in faith by doing that. A believer uses scientific advancements to combat natural or physical evil with thankfulness to God who is the giver of all good gifts and wisdom. James 1.5,17. Remember nothing good comes from the devil; all good comes from God. And medicine which destroys evil must also be thought as God's gift to man. It is a kind of blessing. For example, Jacob considered the possession of balm (analgesic medicine) as wealth (blessing) (Genesis 43.11). Bible looks positively at medicine (Proverbs 17.22; Eze. 47.12). Luke was a physician (note the present tense used there) (Colossians 4.14). The word physician is *iatros* in Greek and used 7 times in the New Testament and always refers to a medical practitioner. Thus Luke was a medical man and still a believer and servant of Christ.

Divine healing is God's intervention to heal us. Sometimes this is direct, sometimes through the use of some medium; e.g., mud for the blind man, oil, dry figs for Hezekiah. God wants us to be healthy and therefore through faith and prayer one can experience divine healing. Jesus healed many people and many testimonies exist of how God heals us. GOD is our Healer. Therefore, as believers our ultimate dependence must be on God. One should pray and seek prayer from men of God in times of sickness so that God's healing will flow in us.

In James 5: 14, the sick man is asked to call for the elders of the church to come and pray for him. Remember, it doesn't say that the sick man should sit at home all alone and pray by himself. It says he should call the elders. Why, doesn't the believer have faith? Can't he be healed if he prays by himself? Of course, he can. But calling the elders for prayer not only shows that in times of sickness our strongest dependence must be in God but also the depth of fellowship that the church experiences, the care for each other. However, it must be noted that James is not speaking here about minor headaches or body aches for which use of balm and rest can bring relief. He is talking about sickness. And the believer must understand that though he may consult the physician during times of illness, he must also call for the church to pray for him, because the church is his family and secondly, if the sickness is because of some sin, confession can bring cure. But this doesn't mean he should not consult a doctor. It is like saying that since we asked for our pastor to pray for our house construction we won't consult an architect or engineer, or to go to the extreme we won't hire a mason. The doctor is not God, he is only a man who knows some scientific principles and tips about the body. And knows the ways in which balance and health can be restored. If we knew what he knew then we would not need to consult him, in the same way that if I knew tailoring I won't give my clothes to the tailor. Does going to a doctor mean that we don't believe in God's healing? Absolutely, no. In fact, if we ask the church to pray for us and we also visit the doctor, we show that we are seeking God's help but also acting responsibly. And

God helps those who help themselves. And a physician is one way in which God sends us help. There are millions who can testify of God's timely help through a physician (who himself may be an unbeliever). We only act irresponsibly by not availing of such help. Hope you know the story, a believer once fell into a river and began drowning; he prayed for God to deliver him and immediately found a few men in a boat coming to help him. In anguish, he turned away from them and fought back all attempts to help; he said, I asked God to help me, I don't want man's help. The men departed. Another batch of experts also came to help but he refused their help assuming that God must directly save him. Consequently, he drowned, died, and reached heaven. There he asked God why God didn't help him; at which God replied that He had sent help in the form of those men who came to help him, but it was this man's misunderstanding about God's ways that led to his rejecting their help and ultimately caused his death. Though this is a story, this is true. It is not good for man to be alone, said God, which means that God created man a social being and we are all in need of each other. Doctors, drivers, masons, farmers, traders, politicians, policemen, mechanics, etc are all a community. Depending on them for several things doesn't mean that we don't trust in God. It is the way God has made us and expects us that we live in harmony to the betterment of society. But above all our trust must be in God.